

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO COLOMBIA

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U.S. Embassy

EDUCATION OPTIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN COLOMBIA



The "Escuela La Inmaculada" in Barbacoas, Nariño, was inaugurated on August 22, 2008 by Colombia's First Lady, Lina Moreno de Uribe.



This program has already managed to organize four gatherings with dances, sport events, and movies. Workshops on good manners, prevention of family violence, sexual abuse and sexually transmitted diseases (STD) were held.

Around 1,200 young people from the town of Barbacoas, in the Southern department of Nariño, will enjoy greater educational and recreational opportunities thanks to the reconstruction and development of the "Escuela La Inmaculada" (The Immaculate School). The project was made possible by the U.S. Government, through its Agency for International Development (USAID), the Barbacoa Mayor's Office and the Nariño Governor's Office.

The improvements made to the school are part of the Colombian First Lady's Open Doors Comprehensive Educational *Plan Padrino* Program. This program seeks to benefit internally displaced young people and adults, those at risk of displacement and the socially vulnerable.

This project improved the school's infrastructure, allowing expands services to young displaced people and improving the quality of education offered. Also, through the Open Doors Project, Barbacoas adopted a more flexible educational model that will offer educational services with greater equity, reaching various sectors of the Colombian Pacific Coast. The new model takes into account the geographical limitations that restrain children from having access to learning centers, seeks to promote economic and social development, and promote democracy, granting vulnerable communities at risk of displacement an equitable access to education.

The Open Doors model is supported by the Catholic Church's Social Pastoral of Tumaco, the local Secretary of Education, local sporting institutions, the local House of Culture, the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF) and the local Ombudsman's Office.

Financing sources

US dollars

U.S. Government, via USAID	118,000
Barbacoas Mayor's Office	3,261
Nariño Governor's Office	26,315
"Escuela la Inmaculada"	1,473
Total	149,735

Population benefited

Located on the west side of the southwestern Nariño department, Barbacoas is predominantly inhabited by Colombians of African descent. The population has suffered massive displacement since 2003 and official records maintained by the Presidential foundation *Acción Social* show that 2,179 people have been displaced (607 via individual displacements and 672 people via mass displacements).



Those who benefit most from this program are highly vulnerable young people who are at risk of being drafted by illicit armed groups with limited economic resources. A second group consists of children and young people between the ages of 7 and 18, unschooled, who due to the lack of opportunities had previously dropped out of school.